



ESCAMBIA COUNTY PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS

6847 N. 9th Ave. Suite A # 141 Pensacola Fl. 32504-9312

April 8, 2019

Escambia County Board of County Commissioners
221 Palafox Place
Pensacola, FL 32502

Dear Chairman May and fellow Commissioners,

This letter is to inform the leadership of Escambia County of the loss of confidence we have in Public Safety Director Mike Weaver. Director Weaver has continuously demonstrated his inability to effectively lead the divisions of Public Safety, and has repeatedly failed to advocate for the true needs of Escambia County Fire Rescue. As a result, on April 3rd, 2019 the Escambia County Professional Firefighters unanimously elected to institute a Vote of No Confidence in Director Weaver.

The past several years have shown an overwhelming need for the advancement of emergency services in Escambia County. Our daily service requirements have continuously grown, and we have repeatedly seen extreme circumstances that have depleted resources to the point of endangering personnel and civilians. Incidents and events such as massive floods, large scale hazardous materials events, special operations incidents, and simultaneous building fires all coupled with normal emergency calls have proven the need for complete support of emergency services in Escambia County. As with any emergency services organization we are in a constant state of evolution. This process involves a great deal of planning, execution, and constant evaluation. Director Weaver, despite the documented information and recommendations of staff, lacks the vision and fortitude to appropriately advocate for necessary service levels. Director Weaver's obstructionist mentality and lack of long-term strategic planning constrains the ability of the men and women of Public Safety to provide safe and efficient emergency services to the citizens of Escambia County.

Not only has Director Weaver demonstrated his inability to lead Public Safety, we now know with all certainty that he lacks the moral and ethical character to hold the position. Last year the fire department underwent a massive investigation into allegations of harassment and poor culture among its employees during which Director Weaver testified that he had no knowledge of any negative behavior or actions conducted by staff. Public Safety's chain of command simply does not allow this lack of knowledge. Soon after the conclusion of this investigation the Chief of EMS abruptly resigned from his duties. His resignation was a direct result of the discovery of unethical and fraudulent activity conducted by members of senior leadership within EMS. Again, Director Weaver claimed to not have knowledge of the alleged activities. Fortunately for the citizens of the County, the discovery of

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fraudulent activities was discovered and further investigation will ultimately rectify the situation. A reported “glitch” recently required the Board of County Commissioners to write off nearly six million dollars in lost revenue. Unacceptable is the only word that describes the situation, and unacceptable is the only word that describes Director Weaver’s attempt at leading Public Safety.

As mentioned, Escambia County Fire Rescue has experienced significant growth in recent years, yet the expansion of career services has been poorly guided. Unsafe working conditions for firefighters and severely limiting the efficiency of services are a direct correlation to the lack of guidance. Director Weaver has repeatedly failed to accurately project the financial needs of the department to the Board of County Commissioners. This has resulted in increased personnel turnover, understaffed fire stations, a failing apparatus fleet, unsafe personal protective equipment, a virtually nonexistent training program, and a rapidly growing loss of morale. The recent resignation of Chief Nail is clearly indicative that a massive communication barrier lies between fire department administration and the Board of County Commissioners. This barrier has not only hindered communications but has prevented both positive and necessary operational changes.

The Public Safety Director’s position demands an individual to be extremely well educated in all areas of public service while maintaining the highest standards of moral and ethical behavior. We, the Escambia County Professional Firefighters, believe with all certainty that Director Weaver does not possess the necessary qualities required of this position. He has repeatedly demonstrated behavior which indicates a priority of self preservation rather than the best interests of the community he serves. We ask that Director Weaver be immediately removed from the position of Public Safety Director, and that the Board of County Commissioners empower subordinate staff to manage their divisions. It is through this decisive action that the Board of County Commissioners will begin to “right the course of Public Safety ship”.

Very Respectfully,

Nick Gradia
President
Escambia County Professional Firefighters